

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING OF JULY 22, 2014**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Desai called the Wednesday, July 22, 2014, meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Council Room, Rocky Hill Town Hall, 761 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, Connecticut.

Present: Dimple Desai, Chairman
 Kevin Clements, Vice Chairman
 Victor Zarrilli, Secretary
 Carmen D'Agostino
 Giuseppe Aglieco

Alternates: William O'Sullivan
 Michael Casasanta

Also: Kimberley A. Ricci, Dir. Planning & Building/Asst. ZEO
 Eileen A. Knapp, Recording Secretary

2. Introduction of Glenn Chalder, Planimetrics, as the meeting Facilitator for the Plan of Conservation and Development Update

Chairman Desai introduced Mr. Glenn Chalder of Planimetrics. Mr. Chalder has been a Planning Consultant since 1990. Prior to that he was a Municipal Planning Director for real estate development companies. He has a Masters in City Planning from Harvard University and a B.S. from McGill University. Mr. Chalder has extensive experience in creating POCD's for various Towns including Rocky Hill's current POCD.

Mr. Chalder addressed the Commission and said this is the beginning of a process. Their goal is to have the updated POCD adopted by July of 2013. This evening he would like to discuss the Process they will go through and the overall Schedule.

3. INTRODUCTORY SESSION: including but not limited to: scope, schedule, 2001 POCD process expectations, issues and topics for 2015 POCD consideration, etc

There are three Phases to the Process that they will be going through. The first Phase is the Issues Scoping Phase where by talking to different individuals, they identify the issues that are current and relevant in Rocky Hill today and in the future. At the end of the discussions they will summarize what they learned in this process and discuss how the Plan should unfold.

The second Phase is Plan Review and Strategy Refinement. The first piece of this Phase includes conservation type strategies to protect and preserve areas in Rocky Hill. The next piece focuses on development and how Rocky Hill has grown and how it expects to grow. The third major theme is Infrastructure, including community facility and services.

The third Phase of the Process is Plan Preparation and Adoption where they take the results of all their discussions and start to assemble a draft Plan. This draft will continue to be discussed and refined. There will be opportunity for public input and feedback. The goal is to have the draft Plan ready by December, giving them 6 months to refine it. Statutes require a 65 day window between the time the Town says the Plan is ready and the public hearing.

Chairman Desai asked how they would maintain consistency with the State Conservation and Development Policy. Mr. Chalder said part of the draft Plan includes preparation of a Future Land Use Plan, which is then compared to the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan Map and the Principal Growth Principals. It is possible to have 3-4 drafts of the Plan before going to a public hearing. Mr. Chalder said he would be conducting confidential interviews to get different perspectives from people in Rocky Hill.

Vice Chairman Clements asked what means they would use to urge the public to participate. Mr. Chalder said will be preparing materials to make the public aware of the kick-off meeting in September. There will be many opportunities for public input throughout the process.

Mr. Chalder asked the Commission about their thoughts on the current Plan. Vice Chairman Clements said he questioned the usefulness of the data because of the age of the POCD. Commissioner Zarrilli said there is a lot of current data available that he hopes will be used in the updating process. He would like to see more color photos and vibrant maps included in the new Plan. Mr. Chalder suggested involving the public by giving them the opportunity to submit photographs that may be chosen for use in the POCD. The Commission agreed by consensus that this would be a good approach to involve the public.

Mrs. Ricci said she did receive an e-mail from Commissioner Zarrilli, which she passed along to the Commission and Mr. Chalder. She also received correspondence from Mr. Ryan Jordan that was included in the Commission's packet.

Vice Chairman Clements said he would like to focus on some of the hot topics in Town, including the issue of open space and multifamily housing.

Commissioner O'Sullivan also would like to discuss the topic of mixed uses specifically the residential portion of mixed use during their discussions. Mr. Chalder said they would be talking about the demographics of the community and how it is changing.

Commissioner Zarrilli asked Mr. Chalder if there is anything the Commission should be considering when looking at the old POCD. Mr. Chalder agreed they need to discuss mixed-uses. There is a current interest in the United States for areas that have a "sense of place".

Commissioner Zarrilli said because of Rocky Hill's rich history, they should highlight that history in the new POCD.

Commissioner D'Agostino stressed the need to get the public involved.

Commissioner Aglieco suggested addressing the sale/manufacture of medicinal marijuana since that is a hot topic currently.

Vice Chairman Clements said even though they revise the POCD, the Commission is still limited by what Applications come before them. Mr. Chalder agreed and said they don't want to try to stifle economic development; they are trying to promote it. By updating the POCD they can try to encourage the best designs possible.

Commissioner Zarrilli said he feels that the Town's signage should be addressed. Commissioner O'Sullivan suggested following Wethersfield's lead of branding the Town using the red onion on all their signs. He also would like to try to tie the Town's signage together with a theme to help build an identity.

Mr. Chalder went over the topics that are typically included in a POCD. They include the following:

- Natural resources
- Open Space
- Historic Resources
- Community Character
- Community Spirit
- Sustainability/Resiliency
- Downtown/villages
- Business Development
- Housing diversity
- Municipal facilities
- Vehicular transportation
- Sidewalks and trails
- Bicycle routes
- Transit
- Utilities

Chairman Desai said he would like to address Open Space because there is less and less open space as more of the Town is being developed. Mr. Chalder said they may want to map out their open space areas because this can help the Town if they are ever trying to get funding for open space acquisition.

Other topics of concerns brought up by Commissioners included:

- The Riverfront area
- Traffic patterns and circulation issues
- Housing diversity
- Population statistics and it's relation to the school system
- Single family development of modest sized homes

Commissioner Zarrilli was concerned about the Town's commitment to following through with the POCD in the form of a Capital Plan. Mr. Chalder said the Statutory Authority to adopt this document lies with the Planning and Zoning Commission but it should really be a vision for the community. Although the issue of funding the suggestions made in the POCD falls outside the P&Z Commission's purview, a well put together POCD will help in the long-term financial planning of the community. Mr. Chalder said as part of the POCD update, he would recommend a Plan Implementation Committee be created made up of people with a desire to make Rocky Hill a better place. The more people involved in updating the POCD, the more likely it will be embraced by the entire community.

Over the next month, Mr. Chalder said he would begin to collect background and demographic information and they will get together at the end of September.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS on the Plan of Conservation and Development Update

Chairman Desai noted that anyone who has any input they would like to provide to the Commission can send it to Mrs. Ricci at the Planning and Building Department at any time prior to the meetings.

Mr. Jim Zagroba of 263 Meadow Road addressed the Commission. He said he was on the Plan Implementation Committee when the current POCD was created but this Committee was dissolved. There is also a Design Review Committee, but no appointments have been made to that Committee. He suggested the Commission rate themselves on how well they followed the Implementation Plan the last time the POCD was updated. He also agrees that the issues of multi use development and multi-family housing should be addressed. Mr. Zagroba would also like the POCD to include a section on the Riverfront to address the 4 ½ miles of land along the Connecticut River. The public needs to be adequately notified in order for them to be able to provide their input.

Ms. Krista Mariner of 58 Farms Village Road addressed the Commission. She would like to see the documents related to the POCD update posted on the Town's website. She wonders if there are additional funds for the POCD in the Town's Contingency Accounts. She believes that a telephone survey is a crucial component to development of the POCD. Ms. Mariner said Commissioner O'Sullivan wrote an essay in 2012 on mixed uses and she wondered if that could be presented to Mr. Chalder. She also hopes the undated Plan includes an implementation guide.

Mr. Ed Chiucarrello of 40 Riverview Road addressed the Commission. He is hoping they get a lot of input from the public and he will do what he can to notify the public. He suggested utilizing robo-calls to make notifications to residents. Mr. Chiucarrello suggested organizing different organizations in Town to meet with Mr. Chalder. Another issue he feels they should address is the landfill along the River. He would like to see more GIS mapping of Rocky Hill parks and trails. Other areas he feels should be addressed are the Ames property, the motocross track, Town signage, the Olsen open space on France Street and the industrial park near Dividend.

Ms. Maureen Mullen of 39 Riverview Road addressed the Commission. She feels the Town fell short on the implementation of the current POCD and the Design Review Board and she is hoping it doesn't happen again. She is encouraged by what she heard this evening and is hoping the Town's history is a more prominent part of the document.

Mr. Ed Charamut addressed the Commission representing the Open Space and Conservation Commission. He and several members of Open Space were present and are looking forward to participating in the process.

Mr. Ryan Jordan addressed the Commission next. He is unhappy with the approval for the Town Center West application. This is open space he would have liked to see protected. There are a number of underperforming strip malls that could be improved before starting a new project like Town Center West. Mr. Jordan also sent an e-mail to the Planning Department that was included in the Commissioner's packets.

Ms. Meg Casasanta addressed the Commission. She is on the Town Council and she thanked the Commission for their efforts. She said she personally will use the updated POCD as her guide to decision-making on the Council. She is in favor of the development of a capital improvement plan and said she plans to participate in the POCD update throughout the process.

Vice Chairman Clements said he fully supports the idea of creating an Implementation Committee to get the POCD off the ground.

5. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING

The next POCD meeting is scheduled for August 26, 2014.

6. ADJOURN

A MOTION was made by Vice Chairman Clements to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Casasanta. All were in favor, MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eileen A. Knapp